882 from their parents. In an overheard conversation, two young men commented at length on how fast people got old at their ages, while people over 30 did not seem to age at all.

The transition for girls is even less clearly defined than that for boys. As girls are sometimes married even before their first menstruation, this physiological transition hardly [881] seems to mark a status change. From the age of 6 or 8, girls essentially perform adult labors in assisting their mothers. Youth is essentially a transition to adulthood and marriage. As a general thing, girls are married soon after the [582] first menstruation.

881 Informants were agreed that most girls experience the first menses at about 14 years of age; whether this is the ideal age or the actual age could not be determined. No cases of failure to menstruate were known. Menstrual disorders apparently do occur sometimes and the aid of midwives is sought in such cases, but no details could be secured. Men, at least, believe that girls are generally ignorant of the menstrual period until they experience the first occurrence, and this belief coincides with a few statements by women. Some girls are said to be a little depressed or frightened, but the experience is not severe. Mothers explain to their daughters that the phenomenon is perfectly natural, and girls never become ill.

882 The mother always informs her husband when the first menstruation occurs. At this time the father increases his admonitions to his wife to watch over the girl. Careful mothers from now on do not let the girls go alone for water or to church or walk about the streets. Care is taken that girls do not see "bad" things. Well-brought-up girls, in fact, are hardly allowed out of the house until they are married, but if this ideal were really lived up to, it is difficult to see how either marriages could be arranged or "stealing" occur. Cherán, though, feels its standards are much above those of other towns and people mention some [186] of La Cañada towns, especially Tacura, as being very bad. The latter town is said even [835] to have many cases of sexual relations between father and daughter, which is said never to happen in Cherán.

841 Most women early become regular in their menstrual periods. No devices for keeping

841 track of the periods are used but some account is kept of the phase of the moon and an approximate idea formed. The normal menstruation is regarded as lasting 3 or 4 days. Slight or excessive flows during the period are believed to be bad. No special garments are worn, but the ordinary underwear is carefully washed after the flow ends.

[834] Women should not have relations with men during the menstrual period, and most women do not resume relations with their husbands until they have bathed, although some do so as soon as menstruation ends. Violation of this [753] rule is believed to be bad for the men and to cause them to contract a disease with ulcers.

841 Women may prepare food for themselves and others, but they must not eat certain foods.
262 These include "cold" things, such as avocados or prickly pears. Beans, if eaten, must be consumed with quantities of onions. Rice, pork, and preserved chiles (because the liquid is very "cool") are also believed to be bad. Dried chiles may be eaten. *Aguardiente* is also avoided, although a little in coffee or orange-leaf tea is believed to be helpful. The majority, if possible, drink chocolate in the mornings even though they may not normally do so or may even dislike it. In connection with the concept of "coldness" it should be noted that this refers to the supposed effects on the person, not to the quality of the thing itself. Cold water, for example, may be consumed freely. Aside from sexual restrictions, men have no special rules to observe when their wives menstruate.

MARRIAGE AND SEX RELATIONSHIPS

581 Marriage is the normal state of the Cherán adult and unmarried persons are relatively rare, except among the aged. Although sexual inverts were reported, in every case they had
838 married. One woman is known to be an invert and is called *toro-vaca*. As a girl she attempted to seduce other girls, and a woman told Rendón that in her childhood the individual in question once tried to drag her into a vacant lot, stopping her mouth with a *rebozo*, but she tore loose and screamed and was rescued by her father. Various charges were also made against the woman in court, but nothing was ever done.